



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/805,708	03/22/2004	Tomohisa Moridaira	450100-04972	8806

7590 01/18/2008
William S. Frommer, Esq.
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
745 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10151

EXAMINER

JEN, MINGJEN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3664

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
-----------	---------------

01/18/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/805,708

Applicant(s)

MORIDAIRA ET AL.

Examiner

Ian Jen

Art Unit

3609

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 November 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 March 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

KHOI H. TRAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

1. Claim 14, 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As for claim 14, line 3, the phrase “ said safety level is obtained by imaging a relation between said object and said movable units as the safe space” does not particularly and distinctly point out and designate a specific safe space in the safe spaces in line 2.

As for claim 16, line 3, the phrase “ said safety level is obtained by imaging a relation between said object and said movable units as the safe space” does not particularly and distinctly point out and designate a specific safe space in the safe spaces in line 2.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed

Art Unit: 3664

in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claim 1, 3, 6, 8, 11-13, 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yamamoto (U.S. Pat NO. 6,330,494).

As to Claim 1, Yamamoto discloses a movable robot apparatus comprising: a safety level status detecting means (Column 1, lines 44 -55; See Central Control Unit 102 in Abstract, Column 4, lines 56 - 61) for detecting a safety level status; safety level detecting means (Column 1, lines 45-55; See External Editing Computer 400 in Column 5, lines 61-65) for detecting a safety level of safety level status detecting means; wherein the safety level of the detected safety level status is determined by comparing the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values (Fig 9, Column 7, lines 15 - 45; Column 7, lines 65 - Col 8, lines 20 where the threshold value is the tolerable range along with the average acceleration range) and grouping the detect safety level status as a function of the comparison result (Column 5, lines 10-25 where the sensor output are group of the status ; Column 7, lines 35 - 45; Column 8, lines 15 - 35 where the status is compared); control means (Column 1, lines 45-55; See Control Section 100 in Column 7, lines 18-24) performing a control process so as to implement prescribed countermeasurement according to safety level status by safety level status detecting means and safety level detected by safety level detecting means.

As to Claim 3, Yamamoto discloses a movable robot apparatus according to claim 1, wherein: control means performs control process so as to implement countermeasures according to a position of said safety level status detected (Column 7, lines 18-25) by safety level status

Art Unit: 3664

detecting means and safety level of the safety level status (Column 5, lines 61-65; Column 4, lines 57- 61).

As to claim 6, Yamamoto discloses a control method of a movable robot apparatus. The method comprises: a first step of detecting a safety level of safety level status detected (Abstract; Column 4, lines 40-50; Column 5, lines 61 - 65); determining the safety level of the detected safety level status by comparing the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values (Fig 9, Column 7,lines 15 - 45; Column 7, lines 65 - Col 8,lines 20 where the threshold value is the tolerable range along with the average acceleration range) and grouping the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values and grouping the detected safety level status as a function of the comparison result (Column 5,lines 10-25 where the sensor output are group of the status ; Column 7,lines 35 - 45; Column 8, lines 15 - 35 where the status is compared) and a second step of performing a control so as to make said robot apparatus implement prescribed countermeasures according to safety level status detected and safety level detected (Column 8, lines 18-31; Column 5, lines 61-65; Column 4, lines 48- 50).

As to claim 8, Yamamoto discloses the control method according to claim 6, wherein: , in second step, control process is performed so as to make robot apparatus implement countermeasures according to a position of safety level status detected and safety level detected(Column 7, lines 19- 25).

As to claim 11, Yamamoto discloses a movable robot comprising: safety level status. detecting means for detecting a safety level status (Column 1, lines 44 -55; See Central Control Unit 102 in Abstract, Column 4, lines 56 – 61; Column 4, lines 40- 50) ; and control means for

Art Unit: 3664

performing a control process so as to implement prescribed countermeasures according to a position of said safety level status detected by said safety level status detecting means (See Control Section 100 in Column 4 , lines 57 – 61; Column 7, lines 18 – 25; Column 9, lines 7 - 20); where in the position of the detected safety level status is determined by comparing the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values (Fig 9, Column 7,lines 15 - 45; Column 7, lines 65 - Col 8,lines 20 where the threshold value is the tolerable range along with the average acceleration range) and grouping the detected safety level status as a function of the comparison result (Column 5,lines 10-25 where the sensor output are group of the status ; Column 7,lines 35 - 45; Column 8, lines 15 - 35 where the status is compared).

As to claim 12, Yamamoto discloses a control method of a movable robot apparatus, comprising: a first step of detecting a safety level status (Column 10, lines 8 - 45); determining the position of the detected safety level status by comparing the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values (Fig 9, Column 7,lines 15 - 45; Column 7, lines 65 - Col 8,lines 20 where the threshold value is the tolerable range along with the average acceleration range) and grouping the detected safety level status as a function of the comparison result (Column 5,lines 10-25 where the sensor output are group of the status ; Column 7,lines 35 - 45; Column 8, lines 15 - 35 where the status is compared); and a second step of performing a control process so as to make robot apparatus implement prescribed countermeasures according to a position of safety level status detected in first step (Column 7, lines 18 - 25).

As to claim 13, Yamamoto discloses a robot apparatus having a plurality of movable units, comprising: a driving means for driving said movable units (See servo motor in Column 3, lines 40 – Column 4, lines 38); control means for controlling said driving units (See Control Section

Art Unit: 3664

100 in Column 4, lines 57 – 61); object detecting means for detecting an object(See CCD Camera in Column 4, lines 40- 48); action determination means for determining an action of robot apparatus (See External Editing Commander Computer 400 in Column 7, lines 4-16); and safety level detecting means for detecting safety level involving object and movable units(See CPU 102 in Column 5, lines 11- 26); wherein control means moves movable units as a function of safety level and action determined by action determination unit to mitigate or avoid danger (See External Editing Computer 400, CPU 102, Control Section 100 in Abstract; Column 7, lines 4 - 25; Column 8 ,lines 40 - Col 9, lines 5 where the control section move the movable unit with respect to the angle function defined as safety level), wherein the action determined is preprogrammed countermeasure corresponding to the detected safety level (Column 8, lines 40 - Column 9, lines 20, control section 00; where the action corresponding to angle and acceleration value of the robot respectively to the preprogrammed countermeasure in control section 100).

As for claim 15, Yamamoto discloses a control method of a robot apparatus having a plurality of movable units, control method comprising: a first step of determining an action of robot (Column 5, lines 11-25), a second step of, when an object is detected, detecting safety level involving the object and movable units(Column 4 ,lines 40-50; Column 5, lines 18-26); and a third step of moving movable units based on safety level detected and action determined to mitigate or avoid danger (Abstract; Column 7, lines 18-25); wherein the action determined is preprogrammed countermeasure corresponding to the detected safety level (Column 8, lines 40 - Column 9, lines 20, control section 00; where the action corresponding to angle and acceleration value of the robot respectively to the preprogrammed countermeasure in control section 100).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 2,7,14,16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto (US Patent No. 6,330,494) in view of Furuta et al. (US Patent No. 6,902,015).

As for claim 2, Yamamoto show all the elements of the claim 1 except safe space is defined so as to correspond to each safety level status to be detected safety level status detecting means and safety level detecting means detects safety level of safety level status based on a volume of the safe space corresponding to the safety level status detected safety level status detecting means. Furuta et al shows a safe space (See Anteflex Region in Claim 1; Fig 4; Fig 5; Column 7, lines 5-17). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safe space for the robot of Furuta et al in order to provide a joint axis range determination in angular degree.

As for claim 7, Yamamoto show all the elements of the claim 6 except the safe space is defined so as to correspond to each safety level status, and in first step, the safety level is detected based on a volume of the safe space corresponding to the safety level status. Furuta et al shows a safe space (Claim 1; Fig. 4; Fig 5 ;Column 7, lines 5-17). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safe space of Furuta et al in order to provide a joint axis range determination in angular degree.

As for claim 14, Yamamoto shows all the elements of the claim 13 and the safety level is obtained by imaging a relation between object and movable units as the safe space (Column 4, lines 40- 50; Column 10, lines 7-30). Yamamoto does not show safe spaces around movable units. Furuta et al shows safe spaces around movable units (Claim 1; Fig 4; Fig 5; Column 7, lines 5 - 17). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safe space of Furuta et al in order to provide a joint axis range determination mean in angular degree.

As for claim 16, Yamamoto shows all the elements of the claim 15 and the control method in the second step, safety level is obtained by imaging a relation between object and movable units as the safe space (Column 4, lines 40 –50 ; Column 10, lines 7 -30). Yamamoto does not show safe spaces around movable units. Furuta et al shows safe spaces around movable units (Claim 1; Fig. 4; Fig 5; Column 7, lines 5-17). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safe space of Furuta et al in order to provide a joint axis range determination mean in angular degree.

4. Claim 4, 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto (US Patent No. 6,330,494) in view of Hattori et al. (US Patent No. 6,463,356).

As for claim 4, Yamamoto shows all the elements in claim 3 except a control means performs control process so as to implement different countermeasures depending on whether position of safety level status is in an upper body or a lower body of robot apparatus. Hattori et al shows the control means performs control process so as to implement different

Art Unit: 3664

countermeasures (See upper limbs, lower limbs in Column 20, lines 22 – 38; Column 21, lines 17-24) depending on whether position of said safety level status is in an upper body or a lower body of robot apparatus. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the control means of Hattori et al in order to perform control process with respect to torso connecting components harmoniously in individual countermeasurement.

As for claim 9, Yamamoto shows all the elements in claim 9 except the control method in second step, control process is performed so as to make robot apparatus implement different countermeasures (Column 20, lines 22 – 38; Column 21, lines 17-24) depending on whether position of safety level status is in an upper body or a lower body of robot apparatus. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the control means of Hattori et al in order to perform control process with respect to torso connecting components harmoniously in individual countermeasurement.

5. Claim 5, 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto (US Patent No. 6,567,724) in view of Takahashi et al (U.S. Pat NO. 5,349,277).

As for claim 5, Yamamoto shows all the elements of the claim 1 except a robot apparatus according to claim 1, wherein: a priority previously set according to a position of safety level status and/or safety level of the safety level status; and control means, when safety level status detecting means detects a safety level status with a higher priority while control process to implement countermeasure is performed changes the control process so as to implement

Art Unit: 3664

countermeasures against the safety level status newly detected. Takahashi et al shows priority is previously set according to a position of safety level status and/or safety level of the safety level status (See “ priority is established among the joints” in Column 8, lines 42- 61); and control means, when safety level status detecting means detects a safety level status with higher priority while control process to implement countermeasure is performed, changes the control process so as to implement counter measurements against the safety level status newly detected (Column 8, lines 42- 61). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safety level status priority and safety level status priority control means of Takahashi et al in order to provide movable unit movable priority synchronized along with other movable units and control means.

As to claim 10, Yamamoto shows all the elements of the claim 6 except a control method, wherein: a priority is previously set according to a position of safety level status and/or safety level of safety level status; and in second step, when a safety level status with a higher priority is newly detected while control process to make robot apparatus implement countermeasures is performed, the control process is changed so as to make the robot apparatus implement countermeasures against the safety level status newly detected. Takahashi et al teaches a priority is previously set according to a position of safety level status and /or safety level of safety level status (Column 8, lines 42- 61) ; and in second step, when a safety level status with a higher priority is newly detected while control process to make robot apparatus implement countermeasure is performed , the control process is changed so as to make the robot apparatus implement countermeasures against the safety level status newly detected(Column 8, lines 42- 61). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the robot apparatus of Yamamoto by setting the safety level status priority and safety level status priority control

means of Takahashi et al in order to provide the movable unit movable priority synchronized along with other movable units and control means.

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed 11/12/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues Yamamoto (US Pat No 6330494) does not show the feature of the safety level of the detected safety level status is determined by comparing the detected safety level status to a plurality of threshold values and grouping the detected safety level status as a function of the comparison value.

Yamamoto shows the safety level of the detected safety level status, which is the robot joint angle measurement derived from the average acceleration equation (Please see, Col 7, lines 35 - Col 8, lines 15) along with the threshold value, which is the tolerable range which confines the average acceleration equation range (Please see, Col 8 ,lines 10- Col 9 ,lines 5), and further given specific plurality threshold values to the safety value of safety level status, which is the angle measurement.

Further, Applicant argues Yamamoto does not show control means moves moveable units as a function of safety level and action determined by action determination unit in order to mitigate or avoid danger, the action determined is a preprogrammed countermeasure corresponding to the detected safety level.

Yamamoto shows the control means moves movable units as a function of safety level, wherein the control section 100 determines the movable units as the function of the robot joint

Art Unit: 3664

angle measurement derived from the average acceleration equation respectively as preprogrammed countermeasure which respond to the detected safety level, which is the robot angle measurement installed in the control section 100 (Please see, Col 7, lines 35 - Col 8, lines 15) along with the threshold value in order to avoid danger as avoiding falling posture (Please see, col 1, lines 45 -56; col 8, lines 40 - 55)

Conclusion

2. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ian Jen whose telephone number is 571-270-3274. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:00-5:00 (EST).

Art Unit: 3664

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Khoi Tran can be reached on 571-272-6916. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



12/15/2007

Ian Jen

KHOI H. TRAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

